

The Roof on a Summer Night by **MidnightEverlark**

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Summary: While at a house party in high school, Mike turns to say something to Will - only to find him gone. Everyone else is tipsy, so Mike goes looking for him. He locates his best-friend-recently-turned-boyfriend on the roof. Deep thoughts, kisses, and laughter follow. Based on a request on Tumblr. It's a happy, fluffy fic about being young and happy, because they deserve it, okay?

The Roof on a Summer Night

It is, arguably, the best party of the summer.

If you like parties. Which Lucas and Dustin do.

Well, more like Dustin does, and so does Max, so together they manage to convince Lucas to attend seventy five percent of the parties he's invited to. Which is a fair number - apparently, joining track boosts you straight from *nerd* to *popular athletic kid*, so Lucas has been receiving party invitations on the regular since freshman year of high school. And if Max and Dustin are dragging Lucas to a house party, well, the rest of them have no choice.

So here they are. The Party, at a party. It's a play on words that Dustin has beaten to absolute death since the very first house party they attended in Freshman year, huddled all together in the corner as if for safety. By now they're more used to it, and they drift around the overcrowded house in a loose conglomeration, keeping each other within shouting distance.

And speaking of shouting distance -

"YO, MAXY!" Lucas bellows, and a head of fiery red locks pops up immediately from the crowd.

"Don't call me that!" she hollers back, but she's smiling. They're both slurring a little.

Mike looks down at the red plastic cup in his hand, swirls it, and sets it on the counter behind him. He only took a few sips, but he's not in the mood to be tipsy tonight. He rarely touches the alcohol at parties, anyway. *Someone* has to round up everyone at the end of the night and get them home. Usually, Mike and Will tag-team it, each taking responsibility for dragging two of the other party members out the door.

"You want any pizza?" Lucas yells to Max, his volume reduced only slightly now that he has her attention. Most of them are hovering over the snack station in the kitchen, picking over the remains of a

two-hour-old pizza delivery.

Max comes trotting out of the crowd, El in tow, their hair in disarray from dancing to *Pour Some Sugar On Me*. They're giggling at something Max said on the way over, and they can't stop even when they reach the rest of the party. Lucas slings an arm around both of them and is met with only half-hearted protests.

Mike turns to his left, hand lifting in search of Will's shoulder, and chuckles, "Keep an eye on Lucas, yeah? Remember last time he drank too -"

Will is gone.

Mike cuts off so abruptly he very nearly chokes on a tiny bit of spit. His hand drifts down through empty air, fingers raking through nothing, and he blinks. It's been five whole years since Will Byers didn't show up for school one morning - in fact, five and a half by now - but that old, familiar spike of panic jolts through him like he's twelve again. It's like the pothole that you can't avoid. Jarring, but not unexpected. It's a knee-jerk reaction, involuntary and deeply ingrained. Will is gone, and Mike's heart rate picks up.

He twitches his head back, downing a whole palmful of M&Ms at once and hoping the chocolate overpowers the aftertaste of spiked punch, and pushes off the counter.

"Dustin. Dustin. Did you see where Will went?"

Dustin snaps out of a brooding reverie. "Huh?" His cheeks are red and his curls are all over the place. The red cup in his own hand levels out just milliseconds from spilling in the middle of his train of thought.

"Did you see where Will went?" Mike repeats, shouting over the last chords of the song. The crush of people in the living room begin yelling out song requests.

"Ummmm, nope," Dustin concludes. He glances around the kitchen and his brow furrows. "Should we go...?"

Mike shakes his head. "I'll go."

And then he's grabbing one more handful of M&Ms from the bowl on the counter, edging around a kissing couple, and slipping into the crowd. The self-appointed DJ puts on *Walk Like an Egyptian* and the crowd shifts, rippling like waves at the lakeshore as people move on and off the dancefloor.

It seems like everyone at this party is drunk, or at least tipsy. There is a ridiculous abundance of alcohol lined up on the counter, in the punch, on a side table in the living room. Everyone has been taking full advantage of it - well, except for Mike and Will. It's summer. No school tomorrow. No responsibilities. No worries. Time to get crazy and live it up, right?

Again: arguably the best party of the summer. And the most anticipated; this party has been the talk of the town since before school let out for the summer. It's on the more well-to-do side of Hawkins, where the houses are even bigger than Mike's. Someone went to great lengths to decorate with streamers, balloons, lantern-and-flamingo shaped string lights, and even a disco ball secured to a small chandelier. Earlier in the evening, the main floor was mired in an ankle-high layer of dry ice fog; now, with the party in full swing, the fog has trickled down a weak mist that swirls around Mike's sneakers. He squeezes through a circle of friends, apologizing as he bumps elbows and jostles shoulders.

Will isn't anywhere near the dance floor - not that Mike expected him to be - or out on the porch, or in the bathroom, or in the family room watching *Dirty Dancing* on the big TV with a group of shyer party-goers. Mike circles back to the kitchen. The beat of the music throbs in his ears along with his heartbeat. It's oppressively hot in the house, thick with the lingering, muggy heat of the summer day. The collective body heat of three quarters of Hawkins High School packed into one house doesn't help, either. The air swims with the smell of perfume and cheap cologne, hairspray, sweat, sweet-fruity punch, bitter beer and faint hints of more expensive alcohol. Mike feels like he could taste it if he stuck his tongue out.

Will's not back in the kitchen either. The rest of the party has regrouped halfway between the kitchen and the living room, and Dustin is trying to get Lucas to dance. El is gently prying a beer can out of Max's hand before she can open it. She makes eye contact with

Mike through the crowd and tilts her head, her expression asking, *Did you find him?*

He shakes his head no, but smiles to say, *I've got it. You stay with them.*

She considers this for a moment, then nods in agreement and lets Max start to take her hair down from its french braid. It's the longest it's ever been, now, falling past her shoulders in a bouncy mass of chestnut curls.

Mike grabs two sodas from a cooler, just to have something to carry while he wanders around like a lost idiot, and dives back into the fray.

The only place he hasn't tried yet is upstairs.

He takes the stairs two at a time, darts past one bedroom door with willful ignorance of the hushed noises behind it, and pauses at an open window to take a breath. The sun set about half an hour ago and the breeze from outside is blessedly cool.

There's a familiar silhouette reclined on the roof just outside the window.

Mike lets out the breath and ducks through the window, folding his limbs awkwardly to fit. He makes enough noise, scrambling and grunting and nearly dropping the soda cans (twice), to alert half the neighborhood to his presence, but Will only turns his head when Mike settles next to him.

"Here."

Mike extends both cans and Will chooses Sprite.

The night air felt cool in comparison to the suffocating heat of the house, but now, sitting in the semi-darkness of a suburban summer night, it's pleasantly warm. Not scorching hot like it was during the day - just comfortably warm. Just muggy enough to hold shivers at bay, and just cool enough to be refreshing.

Neither of them say anything for a few seconds. Will's face has tipped

towards the sky again. Below, the neighborhood is awash in the yellowish glow of street lights, but up here the gold hues mix and mesh with faint moonlight.

"You ran off," Mike says eventually, his tone only half-accusatory.

"Sorry. I mean - sorry." Will shrugs. He never quite lost the habit of over-apologizing, even so long after everything happened. "I needed some fresh air."

"Me too." Mike turns to look back at the window, now just a square of yellow light in the night. The sounds of the party are fuzzy, muffled, but loud as ever. Overlapping voices, pounding music, laughter. Mike makes a face. "Why are we even here, again?"

"Well, let's see." Will pops open his Sprite and goes to work on the tab, see-sawing until it comes off between his fingers. He holds it up for inspection. "Jennifer Hayes invited Lucas to Amelia Smithson's big summer party. Lucas told Max. Max told Dustin. Dustin wouldn't shut up about it. Max sided with Dustin. El sided with Max. Lucas gave in."

"And now we're here," Mike finishes for him. He twists off the tab of his own soda and hands it to Will, who pockets them both. He collects things like that; soda tabs, bottle caps, shells from his family's rare vacations, movie theater tickets, polaroids, notes scribbled in class, pretty pebbles. He told Mike, once, that they help him remember the good times when all he can see is the bad.

They decide to climb one level up, from the porch roof to the main roof, for a better view. And more privacy. But they only list one of those reasons aloud.

They heft themselves up at a low corner and locate a section where two planes of the roof converge, forming a semi-comfortable trough, and that's where they settle. It's a clear night. The stars are out, seeming to dance and wink in the lingering heat waves, and below that, Hawkins is spread out like a map. The house is at the top of a sizable hill, near the edge of town. Mike closes one eye and traces the route back to his own street, following landmarks with his fingertip.

Will scoots over the rough shingles and nudges his way under Mike's arm with gentle insistence. Now that they're not directly in front of a window, his movements are looser. Freer. The streets of the town glow gently, but the roof is cast in shadows. They may as well be invisible. For a moment, Mike is engulfed in a cat-like pleasure at being able to see everything without being seen himself. He shifts, old sneakers slipping a bit on the sloping surface, and pulls Will more snugly to his side. They start up a half-assed conversation about the party, but Mike can tell that Will is paying about as much attention as he is. They're both much too focused on the stars, and on not slipping down the steep slope of the roof, and on each other.

There's an electricity in the air that Mike can't quite put his finger on. A static. A hum. Something warm and alive and tingling that buzzes through his fingertips and up his spine and between the spokes of his ribs. He feels alive, awake, almost hyper - and he has eaten an irresponsible amount of sugar tonight, but that's not the point. It's the middle of summer, he has no responsibilities for the next week, the music is distant and muted, the night is warm and the Cherry Coke in his hand is cold. And he's pressed up next to Will in the darkness, high on a roof where no one can see them. He feels young and wild and *happy*, and the spark in Will's eyes tells him he isn't the only one.

Maybe it's something about the night air. Or the moonlight. Or the chirp-and-chitter of night bugs. Or the wink of fireflies in a small field down below. Or the faint taste of lakewater on the breeze - they're miles and miles and *miles* from the Great Lakes, but Mike still sometimes swears that, on exceptionally hot days like this, he can taste the mineral-water evaporation in the humidity. Maybe it's the muffled thump of the music down below. (The melody of *Livin' On a Prayer* is just barely recognizable through the walls and roof.) Maybe it's the unique sensation of being the only sober ones at a party where everyone is stumbling and slurring.

But Mike has a feeling that it has something to do with Will. With the lifelong best friend that became his boyfriend barely three weeks ago.

The thought alone sends Mike squirming again, this time in an almost childlike glee. Will grabs his arm with a giggle of, "Stop, you'll push me off."

Mike mimes shoving Will off the roof and Will shoots him a look of faux betrayal. Neither of them can stop grinning, though, so it dissolves almost immediately into another giggle. Then Will looks back to the sky. Ever drawn to the stars. A true Rocket Man if Mike ever met one.

Will stares at the stars, and Mike stares at Will.

Sometime between the ninth and tenth grade, Will Byers turned into something of a knockout. Well, in Mike's opinion, at least. That was when Will finally started parting his hair to the side, brushing it back with a small amount of hair gel so that it lay in orderly waves, just barely long enough to curl at his ears and neck. He's always been small and skinny, but last summer his growth spurt made a real attempt at catching up with Mike. He didn't, of course. Mike, much to his mother's dismay, still hasn't stopped outgrowing the hems of his jeans even at nearly six feet tall. But Will is only a few inches behind, and jokes constantly about surpassing Mike someday and finally becoming the taller one. On top of that, Will's face lost the very last of its baby fat over the past year, exposing a tapering jaw and sharper cheekbones than anyone expected.

He never lost his fondness for plaid long-sleeved shirts, though. If it wasn't so hot, he'd probably be wearing one now. Mike snorts into Will's shoulder at the thought. Yeah, if it wasn't nearly a hundred degrees during the day, Will would still be wearing plaid. Unfortunately, the devil himself seems to have opened his oven directly onto Hawkins this summer, so Will is in a Ziggy Stardust tee shirt and truly hideous jean shorts. Mike teased him about them relentlessly in the morning, and then abruptly shut his mouth when the temperature peaked in the afternoon and he was left to suffer in his jeans and short-sleeve button up.

Lesson learned: jean shorts are ugly as all hell, but exceptionally necessary if one does not wish to get heat stroke.

Will is in an introspective mood. Mike can tell even before he opens his mouth.

"You think...?" he starts, and then trails off. He chews contemplatively at a corner of his lower lip. "You think everything's

just random, or are some things supposed to happen?"

"What, like fate?" Mike says, eyebrows lifting. He refuses to put stock in fate, and Will knows it - he's watched so many good people go through so much shit, and he will not believe that they were meant to suffer all along.

But Will shakes his head, probably anticipating Mike's words before he can say them. "More like... some cosmic equation. Or a law of nature. Like gravity or electromagnetism. There are laws for how things work in the universe. Guidelines. I guess I was just wondering if there are any guidelines like that for what happens in the timeline." He's getting on a roll, leaning back into Mike's chest and lifting his arms to gesture. The Sprite pops and fizzes from one hand. "Like, what if, because of some law of spacetime that we can't possibly comprehend, a certain star in space *always* goes supernova at an exact point in time, in *every* timeline or parallel universe or whatever? Or a specific alien species *always* discovers how to go faster than light-speed? Or two people *always* meet?"

Mike smirks and swallows his sip of soda. "You've been watching *Cosmos* again, haven't you?"

"Maybe. Shut up." Will bats ineffectively at Mike's hand. "I'm just saying, maybe there's some cosmic equation out there that makes it so that some things are supposed to happen."

"Like?"

Will taps a forefinger on the rim of his soda can a few times, then tries to set it on the roof. The angle is too steep and it tips right over, empties into the gutter and rolls away with the cheerful, tinny sound that only empty aluminum can produce. Will's hand hovers in the space where his soda just was, and then he jolts with an abrupt giggle.

"Shit."

"Like that?" Mike teases as the small stream of soda fizzes on the shingles and vanishes off the edge. "Was that supposed to happen? Part of some grand cosmic scheme? Because if that's the case I may as

well just toss mine off the roof right now."

"Shut up," Will says again, fighting off a smile. "Asshole. I was gonna be all sweet and say we were meant to meet, but now that you're gonna laugh at me I'll take it back."

"So me approaching you on the swingset when we were five was an act of fate?" Mike says, testing how much he can tease before Will gets genuinely annoyed with him. He's in the clear so far; Will's eyes are alight with humor, his neck craning back to shoot Mike a playful glare.

"Fine, then, next time you ask me to be your friend I'll just say no."

"Ah, that's fine. As far as I understand it you're not my friend anymore, anyway. Or can you be both at once? Best friend and boyfriend?"

Even in the semi-darkness, the faint mix of yellow street lights and silvery moonlight, Mike can clearly make out Will going pink. He lasts about two seconds before surrendering and hiding a bashful grin behind his hands. But he's up again quickly, bouncing back to say, "Both works."

This is new. This kind of playful, teasing banter. This kind of *Will*. The version of Will that Mike never saw before the day of their first kiss. The version of Will that teases and flirts (badly) and snuggles further into Mike's arms seemingly without a second thought. The version of Will that doesn't constantly have his walls up.

The version of Will that turns himself around to face Mike, on a dark roof above a wild party at the end of one of the hottest days on record, and cups Mike's face in his hands. Mike lifts his free hand to Will's hip to steady him on the tilted surface, and then Will's lips meet his.

And Mike wouldn't trade this for anything.

Will tastes like the sweet-sharp snap of Sprite, and the night air, and cheap vanilla chapstick, and the salted chips he had been munching on before he left the kitchen. Mike presses closer, nearly

overbalancing them before Will pushes back. He wants to run a hand down Will's hair, but with one hand on his hip and the other holding his soda, he's low on options.

Fuck it, he thinks, and tosses his soda into the void without bothering to look. They hear it hit the ground just as Mike's hand meets the back of Will's head, and someone below gives a startled exclamation. They pause for a moment, but no one comes looking for the source, so Mike stifles a laugh and pulls his boyfriend back to him.

His boyfriend. He doesn't know if he'll ever get used to that.

The very tip of Will's tongue, hot and soft and slick, dabs at Mike's lower lip and he meets it with a sigh. Some strange, irrational part of Mike wants to shine a spotlight directly onto them. To go back to the party and do this. To shove it in everyone's faces, in the face of the whole town. Quiet, conservative Hawkins, with slurs carved into the school bathroom walls, and old men on porches who judge everyone who walks by, and secrets below every street. Mike wants to stand up and yell, up into the sky, down into the streets, "Look at us! *Look!* We beat you! We beat everything!"

Instead, as the rhythm below settles into something that might be *I Just Died In Your Arms Tonight*, he maps out the shape of Will's skull, from the top of his head to the very first knob of his spine. Will gives a twitch that might have been a shiver, if it wasn't so warm out. His own hands move from Mike's cheeks to his shoulders, gripping firmly, getting restless quickly. They slide from Mike's shoulders to his upper arms, then jump to his sides, then climb into his hair.

This, too, is new. Well, of course it's new, but maybe a better word would be *unexpected*. Will has always been so reserved, so introverted, that Mike never once considered him to be anything other than shy about kissing. And he was - the first few times. But once he got comfortable kissing Mike - once he didn't feel the need to ask permission every time - the floodgates opened. There's no passion like secret, repressed passion, and Will skipped *enthusiastic* entirely, moving straight from *shy* to *handsy*.

Mike isn't complaining.

Will has apologized for it anyway, calling himself "too clingy," but Mike will hear none of it. He loves seeing this side of Will, the side that he has only recently been privy to. The Will that winds his fingers into Mike's hair and nips at his lower lip, bold and bright and ardent, bubbly and vulnerable, holding onto Mike so tightly it's like he'll fall if he -

Shit *shit* they're falling.

Will catches them right before they tumble backwards, pitching forwards so that he lands squarely on Mike's chest and Mike's head hits the roof with a thump.

"Ow," Mike says, but it doesn't actually hurt very much. He's just grateful they fell towards the peak of the roof, instead of right past the gutter and into the bushes. That would have been significantly more painful. And harder to explain.

Will pushes himself up, off Mike's chest, and their eyes meet for barely a second before they burst out laughing. It's that same bright, humming energy from before, turning everything magical and much funnier than it actually is. Or maybe it's the fact that it's getting late and they're both full to the brim with sugar and adrenaline. Either way, Will's arms give out from laughing and he comes to rest on Mike's chest again, giggling helplessly into Mike's neck. The warm huffs of breath against his neck send Mike squirming and laughing harder than ever, and all at once he's grateful that they came to the dumb party after all.

He's grateful for a lot of things. For everything. For this. They have this, even after everything that happened - the strange and horrific events of 1983 and 1984, and then everything that came after. The nightmares, the knee-jerk reactions to a flicker of lights or an out-of-place shadow or a draft. The creeping anxiety and the compulsion to check and double-check that everyone made it home safe at night. The months near the end of the year when, like clockwork, everything becomes twice as bad. But right now it's mid-July, and the chill of the Upside Down seems so far away it could be nothing more than a bad dream, and Will Byers is lying on his chest in the clutches of hysterical laughter. The boy he's had a crush on since he was twelve, though it took him years to recognize his feelings for what

they were. His best friend. His boyfriend. They have moments like this, when it feels like fireworks are going off in their ribs and the world is theirs. And when the world goes back to being unjust and indifferent to their struggles, they have each other.

Maybe Will is right. Maybe approaching the small, brown-haired boy on the swings was some act of fate.

Not that he'd ever admit that. Not after teasing so much. He'd never hear the end of it.

Hey if you have a moment it always makes my day to hear what y'all think. Thanks! :)